

House Bill 1092 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Manning of the 32nd, Stephens of the 164th, Cooper of the 41st, Brown of the 69th, Buckner of the 130th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Chapter 2 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department of Human Resources, so as to provide for legislative findings; to provide for the creation of the Suicide Prevention Program; to provide for the duties and powers related to the program; to provide for staff for the program; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 2 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department of Human Resources, is amended by adding a new Code section to the end of such chapter to read as follows:

"31-2-9.

(a) The General Assembly makes the following findings:

- (1) Every year in Georgia, approximately 850 people die from suicide;
- (2) More Georgians die from suicide than from homicide;
- (3) More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined;
- (4) Many who attempt suicide do not seek professional help after the attempt;
- (5) In Georgia, three out of four suicide deaths involve a firearm;
- (6) Factors such as aging, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, mental illness, isolation, and bullying in school contribute to causes of suicide; and
- (7) Education is necessary to inform the public about the causes of suicide and the early intervention programs that are available.

(b) There is created the Suicide Prevention Program to be managed by the injury prevention section of the Division of Public Health of the Department of Human Resources.

(c) The injury prevention section, in implementing the Suicide Prevention Program, shall:

- (1) Establish a link between state agencies and offices, including but not limited to the department's Division of Aging Services, Division of Family and Children Services, and Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases, local government agencies, health care providers, hospitals, nursing homes, and jails to collect data on suicide deaths and attempted suicides;
- (2) Work with public officials to improve firearm safety;
- (3) Improve education for nurses, judges, physician assistants, social workers, psychologists, and other counselors with regard to suicide education and prevention and expand educational resources for professionals working with those persons most at risk of suicide;
- (4) Provide training and minimal screening tools for clergy, teachers and other educational staff, and correctional workers on how to identify and respond to persons at risk of suicide;
- (5) Provide educational programs for family members of persons at an elevated risk of suicide;
- (6) Develop standardized protocols to be used by the Department of Human Resources in reviewing suicide death scene investigations;
- (7) Work to increase the number of follow-back studies of suicides;
- (8) Work to increase the number of hospitals that code for external cause of injuries;
- (9) Implement a state-wide reporting system for reporting suicides;
- (10) Support pilot projects to link and analyze information on self-destructive behavior from various, distinct data systems; and
- (11) Perform such other tasks as deemed appropriate to further suicide education and prevention in Georgia.

(d) The Suicide Prevention Program shall be provided staff to consist of a full-time coordinator, half-time data analyst/epidemiologist, and administrative support, all subject to available funding."

SECTION 2.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.